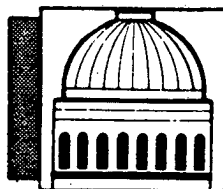


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CAPITOL STUFF

Exploding a terrorist profile

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WASHINGTON—American and Israeli intelligence officials have concluded that the era of the fanatical suicide bomber is pretty much over and that the latest wave of terrorists will come from very unlikely ranks.

These terrorists, say the officials, are poor slobes who have gotten into trouble and are hoping to "buy" their way out of the jam by cooperating in terror campaigns.

Recent Israeli interviews with suspected terrorists who had designs on Israeli-supported positions of the South Lebanon Army and studies in Europe and the Middle East by both the U.S. and Israeli intelligence communities show a distressing pattern to terrorist recruitments.

The recruits tend to be poor peasants or lower-class craftsmen who have marital problems, minor criminal problems, legal disputes or other difficulties that they could not handle themselves. Government agents from Libya and Syria promise to "take care of the problem" and the person's family if the hapless sucker agrees to participate in a terror plot.

This new pattern of coercing terrorists has recently been highlighted in research done by terrorism experts Michael Ledeen, a consultant to the National Security Council and the Defense Department, and Daniel Pipes, a professor at the Naval War College—and it holds far-reaching policy implications for U.S. decision-makers.

Ledeen and Pipes argue that the Reagan administration has been partially paralyzed in its response to the terrorist threat because officials believed that almost all terrorists are Islamic fanatics who are willing to die for their cause—and thus there was little the United States could do to deter them short of killing them before they acted.

The evidence now shows that the new terrorists are not people who expect to die—or want to die—for a cause. They are agents of Syria and Libya, the experts argue, and a more militant response to both nations is needed to stop the recruiting campaign.

Both Pipes and Ledeen espouse a radical policy—nowhere near being accepted by President Reagan—that would have the United States act like an international Mafia godfather.

"No one messes around in a godfather's neighborhood because it is widely believed that the godfather is brutally crazy and there is no telling what the response will be," said Pipes.